

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 26, 2007

Senator Tom Harkin
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, and
Education
Committee on Appropriations

Senator Arlen Specter
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, and
Education
Committee on Appropriations

Dear Chairman Harkin and Senator Specter:

We write to urge you to include \$100 million for the Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership (LEAP) program in the Fiscal Year 2008 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill.

Since 1972, the federal-state partnership embodied by LEAP, with modest federal support, has helped states leverage grant aid to needy undergraduate and graduate students. Without this important federal incentive, many states would never have established need-based financial aid programs, and many states would not continue to maintain such programs.

LEAP is unique among our student aid programs — it is the only federal-state partnership program; it is the only program that contains a two-for-one state leveraging component; and it has no administrative costs so every dollar goes directly to students. LEAP is also a vital part of the package of grants and loans that make it possible for our neediest students to achieve their higher education goals. In fact, over half of LEAP recipients come from families with incomes of under \$20,000.

Grant programs like LEAP are more important than ever amid estimates from the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance that every year in this decade, due to record-high financial barriers, 400,000 college-qualified, low- and moderate-income high school graduates will not pursue a four-year college degree and nearly 200,000 are unable to attend any college at all.

While the President's budget proposes to eliminate LEAP, the Senate has long supported LEAP. As college costs rise and the grant-loan imbalance widens, we urge you to make a meaningful difference in the amount of grant aid available to needy students by including \$100 million for LEAP. This federal funding commitment, which is supported by higher education representatives and student groups, would secure a minimum of \$270 million in grant aid for our nation's neediest students.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and your continued support of education and the LEAP program. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Jack Reed Ansam M. Collins
Samuel Doe Ann Feingold

Jon Lick Jeff Morgan
Robert G. Nicholas Max Buccico

Jan R. Ruppel Robert M. Merendy

Chuck Scherer Dick Dent

Olympia Snowe Blanche L. Lincoln

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